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SUBJECT: UN UPDATE: CNDP JOINING DRC ARMY; DRC AND RWANDA
MOVING AGAINST THE FDLR

1.(SBU) SUMMARY. DPKO A/SYG Mulet told the Security Council the DRC/Rwanda joint operation to evict the FDLR will start in earnest next week. He said MONUC will help plan this operation and will advise the joint force how best to protect civilians during its implementation. He added that other rebel groups are reacting to events by integrating into the DRC army whereas the FDLR may retaliate against civilians. Mulet predicted Rwanda will not extradite former CNDP leader Nkunda and said MONUC will not actively seek to arrest new CNDP leader, and ICC indictee, Bosco Ntaganda. The new Ugandan PermRep said the joint regional operations against the FDLR and the LRA were the "best way to end human suffering" in the region. Mulet said MONUC has received commitments for only 1,845 of its 3,000 additional troops and lacks pledges for the special skill positions and air assets that it especially needs. END SUMMARY.

DRC/RWANDA JOINT MILITARY OPERATION AGAINST THE FDLR

¶12. (SBU) Assistant Secretary-General for the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) Edmond Mulet told the Security Council on January 28 that three Rwandan Defense Force (RDF) battalions are working with seven DRC Army (FARDC) brigades in operations against the Rwandan Hutu rebel group FDLR in the DRC. He said former CNDP rebels are being integrated into those seven FARDC brigades to immediately join in these military operations. He noted that FDLR members are moving to the bush, with roughly 1,000 reportedly moving north and 1,500 moving northeast of Goma. He feared the FDLR may be planning counterattacks, citing information that many FDLR family members were relocated to villages away from potential areas of conflict. Mulet said the joint RDF/FARDC operation is expected to begin in earnest "next week" with the goal of evicting the FDLR and destroying its military capacity. The operation will start in North Kivu and then go to South Kivu, he said. He reported the RDF currently is authorized to be in the DRC for an initial 20 days.

¶13. (SBU) Mulet said that the DRC and Rwanda have undergone a sea-change in their bilateral relationship, noting this is the first time since 1998 there is a united front against foreign fighters in the DRC. He acknowledged the operation has great risks, including a potential humanitarian crisis for the 350,000 civilians in the region and possible FDLR reprisals, but insisted the cooperation is an "outstanding event" and could bring lasting peace to the Great Lakes region. Mulet closed his briefing by saying that the Rwanda-DRC operation against the FDLR reflected a rebalancing of power that had the potential to address questions that have been unresolved since 1998.

MONUC TO HELP WITH PLANNING, PROTECTING CIVILIANS, AND DDRRR

¶14. (SBU) Ambassador DiCarlo asked whether MONUC would be involved in monitoring joint exercises and how MONUC was

ensuring the protection of civilians in its implementation. MONUC, Mulet said, would send six to eight liaison officers, and some (unspecified number) of civilians, to join the joint DRC/Rwanda technical planning cell in charge of the FDLR operation. MONUC would advise on civilian protection issues and help ensure compliance with international humanitarian law. Further measures, such as monitoring teams to accompany missions, are under consideration.

¶ 15. (SBU) Mulet said MONUC is assisting with DDRRR (disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration, and resettlement) for former FDLR fighters. He said 100 fighters and family members have already gone to DDRRR centers in the DRC.

¶ 16. (SBU) Politically, Mulet said, Kinshasa is reporting mixed reactions to Rwandan forces entering the DRC. He cited public and press fears that the operation against the FDLR could "Balkanize" the country. In the Kivus, the reaction has been fairly quiet, but Mulet noted the biggest concern is the fear of FDLR reprisals targeting civilians.

CNDP NOW INTEGRATING INTO THE FARDC; BOSCO LAYING LOW; NKUNDA PROBABLY STAYING PUT

¶ 17. (SBU) Mulet reported two integration centers are being set up to incorporate CNDP soldiers into FARDC brigades currently in the Kivus. He also said two other locations are integrating PARECO and Mayi-Mayi armed forces. Further training, he said, is planned for these new brigades for after the FDLR operation. Mulet said vetting these armed forces was very complicated and its focus was to ensure no child soldiers or foreign fighters were being allowed to join

the FARDC.

¶ 18. (SBU) Mulet said CNDP leader Bosco Ntaganda, indicted by the ICC on war crimes charges, was being discreet in not being present where MONUC forces could see him. MONUC would not/not be involved or participate in any operations if Bosco were present, Mulet said. Mulet said while it was not in MONUC's mandate to arrest Bosco on sight, MONUC could assist the FARDC in arrest operations if asked by the FARDC. He said the ICC formally notified Rwanda of the arrest warrant issued for Bosco.

¶ 19. (SBU) Mulet said he personally believed former CNDP leader Nkunda, currently under house arrest in Rwanda, would not be extradited to DRC.

LRA OPERATION CONTINUES; LRA SPLIT INTO SEVEN GROUPS

¶ 10. (SBU) Mulet said the joint Ugandan/DRC/Southern Sudan operation against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) would continue until at least early February. He said several LRA bases have been destroyed and its supply routes had been disrupted. He reported the LRA had split into seven groups of about 100 people each. Mulet said the LRA had killed 560 and abducted 430 people since this operation began, and that up to 160,000 people had been displaced. MONUC, according to Mulet, is offering logistical support and air transport, but is not part of the ground operation.

NAIROBI TALKS ARE ON HOLD

¶ 11. (SBU) Mulet said the Nairobi negotiations between the CNDP and the DRC government, led by Special Envoy Obasanjo, have been suspended due to recent events after enjoying "considerable success" in helping improve Kinshasa-Kigali relations. Obasanjo wants to see what happens during the Great Lakes Summit on January 31 and the African Union heads of state meeting on February 2 before deciding his next steps, Mulet said. Most Security Council members expressed support for Obasanjo to continue his negotiation efforts.

MONUC STILL NEEDS TROOPS AND ASSETS; WILL SHARE PLANS

¶12. (SBU) In response to a question from Ambassador DiCarlo, Mulet reported MONUC still needs additional troops authorized by SCR 1843 in November. MONUC has commitments for 1,845 of the 3,000 additional troops, including Egypt's recent commitment to supply one formed police unit (FPU). MONUC still needs one battalion, one FPU, two special forces companies, military trainers, intelligence equipment, and air assets. Mulet referenced a letter from UN Secretary-General Ban, dated January 27, which called on countries to give troops, a C-130 aircraft, and 18 helicopters to meet MONUC's needs.

¶13. (SBU) MONUC will share its new Concept of Operations (ConOps) and Rules of Engagement (ROEs), due this week, in February with troop contributing countries and the Security Council, Mulet said. The new ConOps and ROEs take into account the recent events in the region and MONUC's new mandate which emphasizes the protection of civilians as its highest priority.

NEW UGANDAN PERMREP STRONGLY SUPPORTS MILITARY OPERATIONS

¶14. (SBU) New Ugandan PermRep Rugunda said this new DRC/Rwanda cooperation was a "golden opportunity" that all should embrace and support. Rugunda said he personally met with MONUC last week and was happy with the regional and UN cooperation. He praised the great regional support for the operations against both the FDLR and the LRA, and said these operations were the "best way to end human suffering" and were a definitive way to end the chronic humanitarian crisis in the region.

MEMBERS CALL FOR PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

¶15. (SBU) Burkina Faso welcomed and supported the joint operation and stressed the need for continued frank political dialogue to reestablish regional peace. Ambassador DiCarlo welcomed the integration of CNDP and PARECO groups into the FARDC and the new progress in Rwandan/DRC relations. Most other members supported the joint operation and joined DiCarlo in calling for MONUC to ensure the protection of civilians.

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